Abstract

Title – The Role of Self-Forgiveness in Reducing Shame in Religious Pornography Users: A Moderated Mediation Model

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Abstract: Pornography use continues to increase in both religious and non-religious populations. For religious populations, sex outside of a committed relationship, including pornography use, is generally seen as morally wrong. Thus, religious pornography users may violate their internal and external moral standards of behavior, resulting in higher rates of perceived addiction and shame. As morally disapproving individuals continue to violate their own moral standards, shame perpetuates continued use, resulting in a hypothesized shame-use cycle. In order to test this hypothesis, I conducted an exploratory analysis with self-forgiveness in order to discover possible attenuations to the outcome of shame. In this cross-sectional study, I used a subset of data collected using Mechanical Turk. The data was analyzed using two successive mediation and moderated mediation models in order to establish a relationship between religiosity, moral disapproval, perceived addiction, shame, and the exploratory analysis of self-forgiveness. The indirect relationship between religiosity and shame through moral disapproval and perceived addiction was significant. Additionally, the exploratory investigation using self-forgiveness revealed moderated mediation between religiosity and moral disapproval. These findings indicate that future research and interventions on the shame- use cycle should consider self-forgiveness as a potential tool for interrupting the perpetuation of shame-inducing behavior.